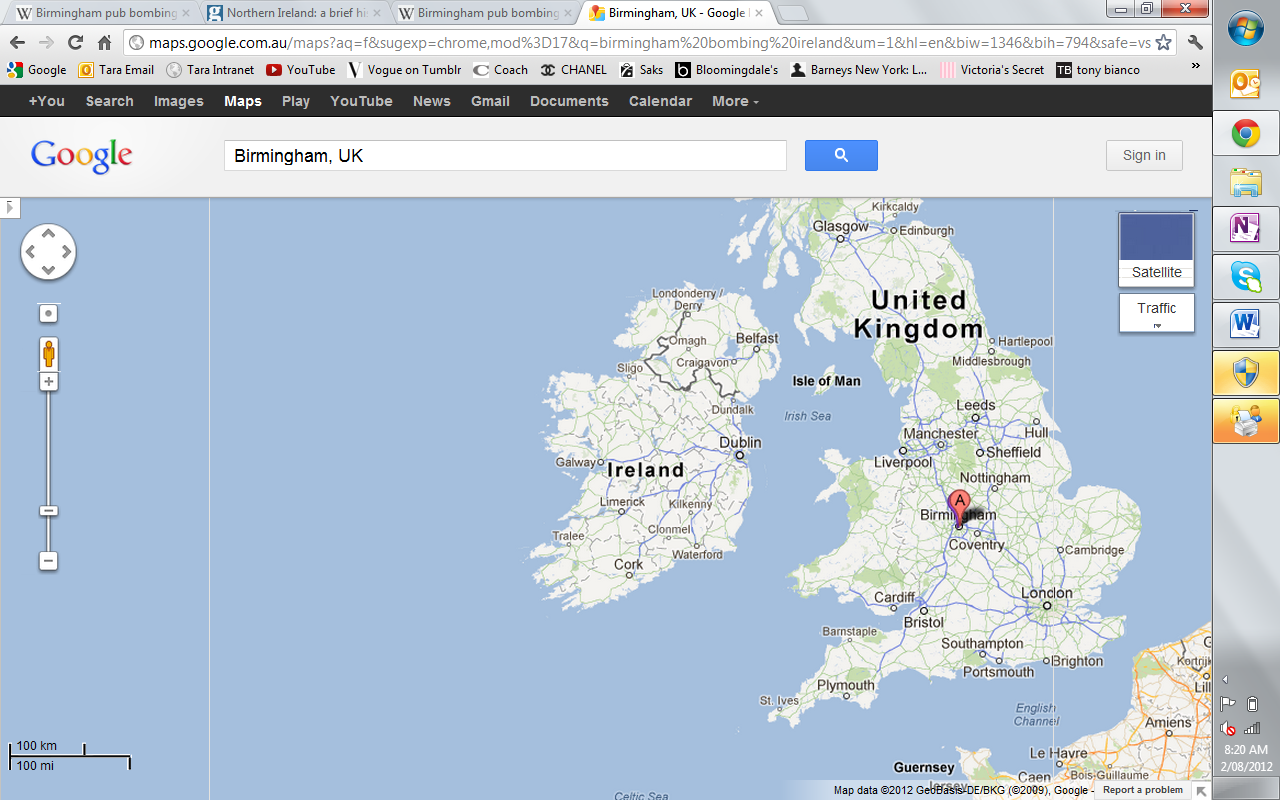
**Where**

Birmingham (England) city centre.

Aftermath of the bombing

Location of Birmingham, England.

The bombs took place in two separate incidents in the city centre of Birmingham; the first was at Mulberry Bush situated at the base of the famous Rotunda building. The second occurred 150 metres away in the basement of the Tavern in the Town in New Street near the city’s central shopping area and main railway station – it was the more destructive of the two.

**When**

* 21st November 1974
* The two bombs went off only seconds apart at approximately 20:30 GMT at the time when bars were packed with mainly teenage drinkers
* At 20:11, the Birmingham Post newspaper received a phone call by a man with an Irish accent saying there was a bomb in the Rotunda building.
* The police were informed and started to search the Rotunda buildings upper floors but the Mulberry Bush pub on the ground level was packed out.
* 6-12 minutes after the phone call, the first bomb exploded, quickly followed by the second bomb which exploded 150 metres away
* A third bomb that was placed outside a bank on Birmingham’s busy Hagley Road, failed to detonate.

**Why**

* It was speculated that the attack was planned to coincide with the return to Ireland of the body of James McDade, who was a PIRA member who had died the week before when a bomb he was planting exploded prematurely.
* Some of the PIRA members stated that the short length of time between the warnings given and the bombs going off was an error. This fit the profile of the Irish rebels’ attacks during this period as their intention was not a large body count but to gain media attention.

**Who was responsible?**

* Provisional Irish republic army was immediately and widely blamed for the bombings at first but it denied responsibility.
* In 2004 on the 30th anniversary of the attacks, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams expressed his regret for the loss of life in the attacks; however the PIRA has never officially taken responsibility of the attacks.
* Attack was later claimed by a small militant group called Red Flag 74, but this was disbelieved by the police.
* Due to the immense pressure to gain a result, the British police quickly arrested the **Birmingham Six** (Hugh Callaghan, Paddy Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McIlkenny, Billy Power, and Johnny Walker) who were convicted in 1975 and sentenced to life imprisonment.
* They were released after 16 years in jail when their convictions were overturned by the Court Appeal in May 1991
* The real bombers have never been brought to trial, and it remains one of the most controversial cases in British counter terrorism history.

**Number of deaths and people injured**

* 21 people dead
* Injured 182
* Two further victims died later

**Impacts of the bombing**

* The people of Birmingham were severely impacted and the attacks severely damaged relations with the Irish community
* Since the IRA was believed to be responsible, the bombings yielded a wave of anti-Irish feelings and attacks on the Irish community in parts of great Britain
* A few days after the bombing, the **Prevention of terrorism act** was swiftly introduced by the British Government - this allowed suspects to be held without charge for up to seven days
* A memorial service was held in Birmingham Cathedral on the 35th anniversary of the bombings
* A memorial plaque is in the grounds of the Saint Philip's Cathedral in Birmingham
* The attacks were the most injurious attacks in England until the July 2005 London Bombings.
* Remains as one of the most painful cases for the people of Birmingham.

**Bibliography**

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*"There were bodies everywhere and I had to clamber over them to get out - the screaming and groaning from the injured was terrifying"*

* An account from Michael Willis (18 years) who was at Tavern in the Town when the blast took place.